

## [Robert E. Lee Tomilson]

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Life History

Folklore.

Miss Effie Cowan,

McLennan County, Texas.

District 8. 2,250

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REFERENCE:

"Interview with Mr Robert E. Lee Tomilson, White Pioneer, Marlin, Texas.

"My father , John Tomilson , came with [?] from the state of Alabama to Texas in 1849. He located four miles west of the [?] of the Brazos River, bought four sections of land and stayed a year alone then returned to Alabama and brought the family through the country in wagons together with around a hundred slaves. He settled at what is now called Tomilson Hill across the river six miles west of Marlin.

"Father, lived through the troublesome days of the War between the States and died in 1865 at the age of 46 years. He was survived by four sons and two daughters. The latter

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being Mrs Amanda Young and Mrs Ludy Landrum. The sons are myself - John; E. A. and Augustus[?]

"I have heard father tell of how they crossed the river at Vicksburg Mississippi, and how they had to wait for the river to go down from the rains and the slow travel, but how they finally reached Falls county. and how the Falls of the Brazos was the only suitable camp camping place when they reached their destination. The country was wild and unsettled, no public roads scarcely, just cattle trails , and wild game in the Brazos bottom was plentiful so they did not have to worry about meat.

"Fathers plantation extended from the Tomilson Hill , to the Brazos river just six miles west of Marlin. In 1850 he took his cotton to Houston to the market. C.12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 Also to Brownsville, Texas, the nearest railroad. Several men would go in together and would work from eight to ten head of oxen to the wagon to carry their produce. They would be from six to eight weeks on the trip and on their return they would bring enough supplies to last through the year.

W" Our nearest neighbor was four miles away and there wer about ten famililies in a radius of fifteen or twenty miles, with the exception of Marlin to the east where there were around fifty families. To the west what is now the Lott. Chilton, Durango and Rosebud communities the settlments were thinly populated. Before Marlin had a church we worshipped in homes, and my brother helped to build the Marlin Baptist church. About the year 1862 to 1870 living in the Marlin and Blue Ridge communities there were the following families. (That is , part of them.)

"The Bartletts, Chruchill, Jones, Killebrew, Bartons, Hunnicutt, Garrett, Bell, Bassett, Fountian, Flowers, Cornelison, Mitchell, and to the west of Marlin to the Bell county line there lived General Shields , afterward American Consul to South America and [later?] collector of toms customs at Galveston later, the . The J.H. and ohn John Gassaway

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families, E.J. Davidson ranch, also the John Powers and Dick Beal who were stockmen and ranchers. Col. J.C. Gaither, Legislator and Senator.

"I was a boy [?] 10 years old when Governor Coke was elected Governor of Texas and when he drove Governor E.J. Davis out of the governor's chair at Austin. (The carpet bagger governor). The earliest impression of my political reaction in Falls county was the change from the carpet-bagger rule as it was called when Davis was governor. 3 "In Falls county there were more negroes at this time than white people and they were erbearing overbearing . I remember how when the men went to vote when Coke was elected governor [?] at Marlin , they had to march between rows of negro guards. How they were all set to win their [men?] and how the white men came armed in order to fight , if need be , for their right to vote. There was a comparatively peaceful election for some one began shooting up near the square and most of the negroes fled to the Brazos bottom and the white men went on with their voting. fter After it was over they held a celebration that night , over their success. Bon - fires were lit and great was the rejoicing over the return of the white man to his right to vote.

"I can see in memory the first business houses of Marlin. They were the general merchandising merchandising store of Bartlett and Killebrew who had their goods hauled by frght freight from Houston. The old stage stand was located on the suare square and it crossed the river at Rock Dam, about six or seven miles above Marlin.and on into Waco up the old Waco Marlin road. When the old log court house was in use I remember that Berry Barton, and Killebrew, were sheriff and also A.D. Scroggins [?] was sheriff and tax collector. Lawyers were J.D. Oltoft, Goodrich and Clarkson, and E.C. Stewart who was county Judge from about the years 1870 to 1875. I was County Clerk two years and deputy for four years.

"The first [?] hanging I ever saw were men by the name of Howard and Jones who killed a white man three miles east of Marlin in the bed of big Sandy creek. They were hung in a grove of trees north of town where [???] 4 the overpass bridge intersects with the

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International and Great Northern Rail-road. When the citizens caught horse and cattle thieves they were hung without recourse to law , thereby putting a stop to so much stealing. Later they were dealt with impartially by law in the way of sentencing them to the pen.

"In those day the country was full of squatters who settled on the land and stayed until some one bought the land and ran them off. The older settlers were men of rugged honesty. One could lend them from a \$100.00 to a \$1000.00 and they would pay it back in due time without recourse to the law . Often not charging any interest at all. I can remember George Gassaway , rancher and farmer , riding up to our gate, hitching his horse to the old hitching post and staying to eat dinner with us, while all the time he was in the house there was a shipment of money tied to his saddle-bag outside, that which he had been to Marlin to get to pay off his men and run him for several months.

"Some of the saloons at Marlin were owned by Kimbrough, King, Barlow and Tom Stewart. It was customary for the ranch men and their cowboys to meet [?] these saloons when pay-day came and settle up for their work. It was seldom that there ever developed any trouble between the rancher and his cow-boy, but the cowboy's took this time to celebrate and it was not uncommon for their months pay to be spent over the ambling gambling table before they left. But it was all in the life, they were good losers as well as good earners. He was a cheerful and happy man as a rule and took his misfortunes along with the good. 5 "The stock men drove their cattle through to Abilene and Wichita Kansas in those days, over the old Chisholm trail which ran west of Waco and Fort Worth to the markets in Kansas. I had a brother who helped to drive the herds for Powers and Beal, cattlemen. It took them two or three months and let them graze on the way. At the end of the trail the boss would meet them and pay them off. This is when they, too, would celebrate their long hard drive by putting on what the younger generation of this day would call a "whoopie". For they surely won some good times after the drive which ten often would take from three to four months and they had to be continually on the watch for Indians and cattle thieves, cattle stampedes and so forth. However the destination usually

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was reached with the herds in good shape. Texas steers at this time brought from \$10.00 to \$20.00 apiece, and fine milch cows sold for \$10.00 and \$15.00 each.

"After the Houston and Texas Central Railroad came through Marlin, in 1870 some of the merchants were Mose Levy, N. Rickleman, Rosenthal and Maymon, Marens and Franks [?] Grocery. Lyons Bro's; Dry Goods, L.B. Chilton. W.R. Patillo and Mr Scruggs. Some of the teachers were W.M. Chilton, Miss Martin, sister of Captain Martin the man who was the surveyor for the Houston and Texas Central Rail-road , and Miss Bartlett. Some of the preachers were J.R. Touchstone, M.K. Thronton , Baptist; J.M. Montgomery Prsbrterian Presbyterian , [?] Weems Wooten; [?] and - Mr Hotchkiss , Methodist.

"When the now famous Mineral Water of Marlin's Hot Wells was discovered it was piped at first to a few residences and as it was not practical for domestic purpose it was turned off and the first notable case of cure was a man from Houston. D.JW.W. Cook was the first doctor to discover 6 the curative power of the Hot Wells. There were many other doctors who soon followed his example of using it for Hot Baths for rheumatism, among them Dr Walter Allen, deceased. Dr Rice, Dr J.W. Torbett who is the head of the Torbett Sanitarium and Majestic Bath House and Dr N.D. Buie who is the hea head of the Buie Clinic. The government Crippled Childrens hospital and bath house has recently been stablished with Dr Hipps as its head surgeon. There have arisen so many clinics that it would be useless to go into them all now. But in the days gone by , instead of the citizens appreciating the Hot Wells they threatened to sue the city for putting off the hot water unfit for domestic purposes on them. So that was sd said to be the reason it was cut off from their homes.

"Other prominent men of the community west of Marlin which I failed to name was W.G. Ethridge, Representative D.Y. Gaines, Col. W.D. Gaines. E.H. Hatch. Gilbert Jackson, Turner Wiggins; Robert Moore, for whom the town of Mooreville was named . Hardy Jones, G.H. Bowman; Lee Fiser; and Ed McCullough, a relative son of the Texas famous ranger and Indian fighter Capt. Ed Mc Cullough, who came to Falls county in 1865 and

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brother of Judge Tom McCollough of Waco. Ed McCollough is still living near the old home after having spent a number of his years as a banker in Waco.

“For our school house in those early days we had the old log school house with the split logs for seats called puncheon seats. I later attended the A& M. College of Texas at Bryan in 1880 & 1881. When the Sam Houston Teachers College of Huntsville, and for a time taught school. [??? ?????????? ?????????? ?] 7 “As I look back over the political horizon of Falls county I can see our present Senator Tom Connally when he first came to the town of Marlin . This was in May of 1899 when he began his legal career. He was elected to the twenty- seventh legislature in 1900 and the twenty-eighth in 1902. He gave satisfaction to his constituents so they elected him county attorney in 1906 and again in 1908 , his service expiring in 1910. Since this time he has been continually sent to Washington to represent this district.

“Then there was Judge David Boyles of Marlin who came to Texas in 1878 and settled near Reagan living there for twenty-four years . While while making his living there as a contractor he began the study of law and passed his examination under for the bar, under Judge B.H. Rice, Messrs Swan and Clampitt. He began the practice of this profession in 1884 and in 1896 he was appointed assistant county attorney which office he filled for six years. In 1904 he was elected county judge, and reelected to this office in 1906. Since his retirement until his death he devoted himself to the practice of Law. And in this he was beloved by men in all walks of life.

“Again [I look?] into the past and to my mind comes talk of Falls county during the days of the War between the States, and the name of Zenas Bartlett comes up. He was just from a trip from his old home in Mobile Alabama to California , where he was one of the forty-niners who formed an army of gold-seekers to the Golden Gate, some across the desert and some via the Isthmus. After trying his luck with some degree of success he came to Falls county and left his name stamped on the history of the county. 8 enas Zenas Bartlett Sr. passed away in 1897 leaving a widow and seven children. There were two son which

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have also left their names on the political life of the county. The eldest, Hon. Churchill Jones Bartlett first started life work in the office of Marlin's newspaper , the Marlin Ball , under T.C. Olterf. With the closing years of Cleveland's administration he entered the post-office at Marlin and was commissioned by President Harrison as postmaster , was city treasurer and secretary for ten years and justice of the peace for four years. Later he ran for representative of Falls county to the legislature from the Sixty-seventh district which embraces Falls county.

"He was elected to the thirtieth and thirty-first legislature in 1906 and 1908. There was a hot race for governor at this time between Gov. Campbell and Mr Bell. Mr Bartlett being for Campbell and after his election worked in harmony with him. He helped to put over several important laws during his term of office , among them the abolishment of the strap for punishing criminals in penal institutions. He was delighted with the opportunity to take part in the enactment of laws which did not "Turn Texas Loose", a slogan of his opponent.

"The fifth child of enas Zenas Bartlett Sr. was enas Zenas Jr. I must tell you a little of this son who also made a place in the county's history , for the name of Bartlett. This son was educated in the Marlin public schools, at the Texas A.&M. College and graduated from the law department of Texas University in 1890. He then became a member of the firm of Rice and Bartlett, which existed until 1907, when Judge Rice was appointed to the bench of the Court of Civil Appeals. At this time the firm of Spivey, Bartlett and Carter was organized. It is his Mr Bartlett's most cherished ambition to see the prosperity of his town and county. 9 "Aside from the political memories of Falls county. I have given you the names of the first business men, among the ones of later date are Fran Frank Peacock, who has been one of the town's best real-estate boosters aside from in addition his retail mercantile business. Bradley Linthicum , who was a member of the firm of Cheeves and Linthicum, who first came to Marlin as bill clerk for the Houston and Texas Central Railroad in 1882. and remained to become the Vice-President of the First National Bank.

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[ “ There could be written many more incidents of the early settlers of the county, from political characters [?] to the business men and the county officers [?] well as those who gave of their talents and time to the progress of the schools and [?] churches , but for this time I will leave these names and characters which I have personally known , and perhaps at another time tell you of them. ?]